

Tarrants Sees Scapegoat Plan

Says Reward May Have
Been Informer's Goal

MERIDIAN, Miss. (AP) — Thomas Albert Tarrants III of Mobile, a self-styled Ku Klux Klan guerrilla fighter, charged from his jail cell here Wednesday that the attempted bombing of a Jewish leader's home for which he was convicted last week was planned in order to take the pressure from the bomber of a synagogue.

Newsman Terry Keeter of Meridian obtained an exclusive interview with the man in his fifth-floor cell in the Lauderdale County jail. Keeter is the first man outside of Tarrants' family and attorneys to talk with Tarrants since his arrest on June 30 following the attempted bombing of the home of Meyer Davidson.

"I feel it was a man involved in the synagogue bombing who was looking for a scapegoat and also for that large reward," Tarrants said. He referred to a reward of nearly \$80,000 offered

following the bombing last summer of the Temple Beth Israel at Meridian and a series of nightrider attacks on Negro churches in Lauderdale County.

SAYS NO WARNING

When Keeter asked him if he would reveal the name of the man who he thought planned the bomb attempt at Davidson's home, Tarrants very emphatically replied that he would not.

Tarrants told the newsman that he felt officers staked out at the Davidson home had planned to kill everyone caught there. He said there was no warning at all before the officers opened fire. In Tarrants' trial, officers testified they shouted for the man they saw trying to place a box on Davidson's driveway to halt before they fired.

"The bombing was arranged by a person who was in collusion with the police and the FBI for the purpose of collecting a reward, and, to protect their informer, they didn't plan any survivors from the incident at Meyer Davidson's home," he said.

Keeter said the session, lasting nearly two hours, took place at the door of Tarrants' drab gray cell on the fifth floor of

the courthouse, known as "high five." It is a maximum security area where Tarrants is kept alone under heavy guard.

ARM BANDAGED

Keeter said the young man spoke with him freely through a grating in the door of his cell. The newsman was not allowed to enter the cell, but he said they were alone throughout the interview.

He said Tarrants' arm is still bandaged from the wounds he received on the night of June 30 in a running gun battle with police. Two officers were wounded in the exchange, one critically, and a former Jackson schoolteacher, Mrs. Kathy Ainsworth, was found fatally shot on the floorboard of Tarrants' car.

Earlier Wednesday, Tarrants' attorney indicated they would challenge Mississippi's insanity law. Roy Pitts of Meridian and Thomas Haas of Mobile said they would file a notice of appeal Thursday following the denial of a new trial motion earlier in the week.

Tarrants had entered a plea of not guilty by reason of insanity to the attempted bombing charge, but he was found guilty and sentenced to 30 years in the state penitentiary.